



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **FOOD STAMP USERS URGED TO GUARD AGAINST NEW SCAM**

**Richmond** – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has notified the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) of a new scam targeting individuals who receive Food Stamp benefits and use an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card.

The scammer calls a food stamp recipient and says that there is a problem with their account. The scammer pretends to access the account, only to discover that it cannot be "located" on their system. The scammer then asks for "additional information" to help find the account, such as the EBT cardholder's address, date of birth, Social Security Number, EBT card number, etc. The "account" is never located, and the call ends. The scammer is then able to use the EBT cardholder's information for a variety of purposes. Currently, this scam is reportedly being used by collection agencies to obtain information they otherwise would not have.

USDA urges food stamp recipients to avoid becoming victims of this scam. Never give out personal information over the telephone unless you have placed the phone call and know that the individual/organization that is receiving the information will keep it secure. If you have been contacted as a part of this scam, please call VDSS toll-free at 1-800-552-3431. For more information on food stamps, visit VDSS' web site at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/foodstamp.html>.

The Virginia Department of Social Services (<http://www.dss.virginia.gov>) Home Office is located in Richmond and administers social services programs, consistent with Federal and State law and policy of the State Board of Social Services through 120 local departments of social services (LDSS) throughout the state. The VDSS mission is "People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse and neglect to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities."

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